

WRESTLING FORUM

JUNE 15, 1991

VOLUME VI

ISSUE 9

WRESTLING'S BEST KEPT SECRET

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STAFF

JON GALLAGHER—EDITOR

SEAN GRANDE

ED GAREA

SEAN HENDRICK

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IF IT WEREN'T FOR BAD LUCK...

I'd have no luck at all

Well, folks, we're back again, and hopefully on time. Between the problems with the post office and the printer (seems if one isn't giving me trouble, the other one is) I'm going to be a candidate for the Hair Club for Men before the end of the year.

Last issue we mentioned a possible sale of operations. We have had three calls from interested parties since that issue hit your mailboxes. We've had a dozen or more calls from people who are concerned about the Forum changing hands. No decision has been made at this point one way or another, but since our subscription drive is headed in reverse, it does seem a logical alternative to folding. One set of potential buyers will be down sometime in July to take a look at how we operate. A decision should be made by then.

After all that, let's take a moment to tell you about us. We are *Wrestling Forum* and we publish on the 15th and 30th of each month. Cost is \$1.50 per issue and you may subscribe for up to six months worth at any one time. All subscriptions, letters, results, etc. should be sent to **WRESTLING FORUM, BOX 65, KNOXVILLE, IL 61448** unless otherwise specifically noted.

Just to answer the most frequently asked "What if" question in regards to the sale of the Forum. Whoever buys the Forum will have to honor all subscriptions that we currently have. In other words, if you had 9 issues remaining on your subscription when/if we sold/sell the bulletin, you would still have 9 issues remaining under the new ownership. That is the only way we would sell the Forum.

We've got a lot to look at this time around. Ed Garea is with us for his regular column with an added twist. This is the first of a three part series which will continue in future issues. He has informed me that next issue he'll be with us for a more contemporary column and the second and third installments of this series will continue when there isn't anything current to write about.

The Barometer is next and once again, we ask you to come out of your shell and cast your votes. Participation this month is the lowest we've had since we reinstated the Barometer.

THE **W**RESTLING **B**AROMETER

May 1991

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Welcome back to the all new and exciting Wrestling Barometer, the unique census of what's hot and what's not in professional wrestling, presented exclusively each month in *Wrestling Forum*.

Responses this time were down again, the lowest since we revamped the feature. We're blaming most of that on the Postal disservice, but we are in desperate need of votes for next month.

We'll take an in depth look in a moment, but first, let's review how Barometer entries are tallied. Five points are given for a first place vote, three for a second place vote, one for a third place vote and half a point for any item that is included on a voters list from fourth place on. Finally, a minimum point total is arbitrarily decided upon for inclusion in the column so we can focus on the month's major trends. Now, on to the May Barometer:

WHAT'S HOT

(NEEDED TO QUALIFY: 15 POINTS)

1. STEINERS VS STING/LUGER (24 POINTS)
2. Superbrawl (19.5 points)
3. Sid Justice character (16 points)

WHAT'S NOT

(NEEDED TO QUALIFY: 15 POINTS)

1. OZ (34 POINTS)
2. UWF Pay Per View (15 points)

NOTES: Herb Abrams nearly scored a double dipper as his pay per view missed the hot side by just 2 points....Oz was a unanimous choice on the Not Hot list as his name appeared somewhere on every ballot...Just missing the down side was Dusty Rhodes...No one thing would have vaulted him onto this list as everything from his booking to his commentary to his Bull Drop In appeared on ballots....The Sid Justice character was a late entry and popped up on the last several ballots that arrived.

**DEADLINE FOR JUNE BALLOTS IS JULY 12, 1991.
SEND BALLOTS TO:**

WRESTLING BAROMETER

BOX 65

KNOXVILLE, IL 61448

I•N•D•E•P•E•N•D•E•N•T•L•Y S•P•E•A•K•I•N•G

The Universal Independent Wrestling Association, headed up by Ed Zohn, has landed TV time in Baltimore on channel 13, WJZ-TV. The time slot is not the most desirable (1:30 AM in between Sundays and Mondays), but he has also added some cable systems in Virginia, Delaware, Maryland and Pennsylvania. They will be doing some TV tapes from a night club called Steele Town and have signed Cactus Jack to come in for a couple shows.

Eddie Sharkey and Alan Epenstein combined for a show in Springfield, IL this past week. Evidently there are still some hard feelings left over towards us after the screw up with the UAWF in Chicago, as repeated calls to Eppenstein for information on the show went unanswered. As a result, we felt it was not worth the time or trouble to drive to Springfield to take in the show.

Herb Abrams didn't make a whole lot of friends during his attempt at a Pay Per View. Technical glitches highlighted the attempt that looks like it may set a new low in buyrate history. We've been told that several cable systems across the country carried anywhere between five minutes and an hour of the show, but not the whole thing. Satellite dish owners were blocked out of receiving the show through a complicated scrambling system that probably added a few thousand dollars to the cost of producing the show. Abrams and several wrestlers were scheduled to appear on a cable TV public access channel in the Tampa area, but evidently they forgot and they no showed that talk show. Add that to the list of no shows that failed to appear and you can understand why no one thinks Abrams will survive the next six months.

Enough of the editorializing; here's the results of that show:

BLACKHEARTS VS JIM COOPER & FIRECAT

Not bad for an opener. I was most impressed with Firecat who did some nice flying stuff. The Blackhearts won the match, pinning Cooper after a double hot shot. Luna Vachon was at ringside with the Blackhearts and choked Firecat with a chain. **GRADE: C+**

TERRY GORDY VS JOHNNY ACE

Don Muraco was a no show and replaced by Ace. This was a street fight match. My tape of the show does not include sound, so I can only go by what I was told that it ended in a no contest. Huh? I thought street fights were supposed to be no DQ! Did Ole book this one? Anyway, Ace tried a dive through the ropes, but his foot got caught and had Terry Gordy not caught him on the way down, Ace would have busted his head open on the floor. They brawled through the crowd (attendance was less than 600) and back to the dressing room. This sounds a lot better than what it was. **GRADE: C-**

POWER TWINS VS KILLER BEES

Blair and Brunzell won the match, using the old mask trick. One of the Bees (Brunzell I think) tried a sunset flip but the Twin held the ropes. The other Twin came in and the ref put him out while the other Bee (Blair) did a

sunset flip from the outside the ring. Brunzell scooted, the ref turned around and counted the pin. **GRADE: C+**

ROCKIN' ROBIN VS CANDI DIVINE

Robin won this one with the most used move of the month, a school boy after Candi missed dive in the corner. **GRADE: C-**

PAUL ORNDORFF VS COLONEL DEBEERS

Advertised as a strap match, each man *carried* a strap. It's an *Indian* strap match when the two are bound together by a strap. This was a quickie, under five minutes. Orndorff hit a piledriver and pinned DeBeers clean, but after the match DeBeers attacked Paul with what looked like a stun gun. **GRADE: D+**

Captain Lou did an interview segment and I'll bet the dialogue I made up because of the lack of sound was more interesting than what actually was said.

BOB BACKLUND VS IVAN KOLOFF

These two worked a good seventies style match with Backlund showing off his strength and conditioning. I was impressed with both men here though I'm told the crowd (not the right word) was not into it at all. Backlund got a clean pin with a rolling bridge. **GRADE: B**

SONNY BEACH & STEVE RAY

VS

BOB ORTON & CACTUS JACK

John Tolos, who had already worked for Titan, did show and was in a cage above the ring. Not a bad match, but short. There was a ref bump and Orton went to hit one of the babyfaces (couldn't tell them apart) with brass knucks and he ducked, Orton hitting Jack instead. The baby then pinned Jack. The best part of the match was the brawl between Jack and Orton afterwards. They will continue what could be a great feud. **GRADE: B-**

STEVE WILLIAMS VS BAM BAM BIGELOW

A short match, but excellent. Abrams brought the belt to the ring and was swung out of the ring by Bigelow when they shook hands. Double juice by five minutes. Highlight was a wicked clothesline by Williams that Bigelow sold to the max. Doc tried the stampede, but Bigelow grabbed the ropes and Williams had to do it again. A clean pin followed a successful stampede and Doc was crowned the first UWF TV champion. **GRADE: B+**

OTHER INDEPENDENT NEWS...

The Sunshine Wrestling Alliance, based in Florida, is out of business for the most part. They had been running weekly shows before small crowds for the better part of six months, but an internal conflict split the group.

Another group has started in Florida with Eddie Mansfield (of 20/20 fame) having a major role. This past Saturday night, they ran a show at Universal Studios in Orlando, taping four hours of TV. Many of the wrestlers who worked for SWA appeared along with Rockin' Randy, Lou Perez, and Thor. The group is called the International Wrestling Federation and has Cliff

continued on page 14

/// PENCIL POINT ///



UWF BEACH BRAWL

Thumbs up for the UWF Beach Brawl. The WWF has been a decade long embarrassment of seemingly psychotically deranged cartoon characters involved in completely unbelievable skits and angles. World Championship Wrestling has been a schizophrenic promotion with top ring talent at the mercy of frustrating screw job endings and angles that go nowhere. Recently we've seen such attempts to emulate the worst of the WWF as Fantasia, Oz, PN News, Johnny B Badd, and Brian Pillman as a giant rat!

The UWF Pay Per View was a breath of fresh air for wrestling fans who want pinfall endings, hard ring work and wrestlers who have names like human beings. Only Luna Vachon and her Blackhearts came across as psychos, but every promotion can use *one* such act; it just should not be overdone. The UWF is not perfect, but Abrams is trying to launch a dignified wrestling promotion aimed at people who have some higher level taste than what subsidizes the WWF. I hope there are enough such people out there to make the UWF a success. The Japanese fans support and demand a mature wrestling product. So do the Mexicans. Why can't Americans?

•DON G. SMITH•

•MATOON, IL•

PAY PER VIEW MANIA

I seriously look for the buy rates on PPV shows in the future to take a steep decline. I know I write more about money and the lack of it than any ten other fans, but let's take a look at the saturation of the PPV market:

WCW will run four PPV's this year at a total cost of somewhere around sixty dollars. The WWF will run four shows at a cost of around hundred bucks. Herb Abrams just ran one for fifteen bucks (providing you could find a cable system carrying the thing). Add that to all the little stuff like the Hot Ticket and Japan Supershow and you've got close to \$200 tied up in watching wrestling on TV.

With so much to choose from, and the recession, people will become more selective about what they watch and order. Once the baseball playoffs, World Series, NBA finals, NCAA final four, and Superbowl hit PPV, the mainstream sports will take command of the PPV dollar. What we'll be left with is fewer Pay Per Views involving wrestling.

Wrestling had better enjoy its PPV heyday as long as it can. When the other sports start hitting the tube, the abundance of wrestling Pay Per Views will have its days numbered. If I were in charge of either the WWF or WCW,

I'd make sure I had a contingency plan.

Simply put, I'd pay more attention to running successful house shows with maybe a couple of PPV's a year.

•KEN SNIDER•
•WAUKEGAN, IL•

HULK HOGAN ROOKIE CARD

The reader who corrected your version of Hulk Hogan's rookie card and you missed an important point last issue. The first issue of WWF trading cards was in 1987 and they were issued by Topps, one of the major card companies. I believe that even though they don't produce the current wrestling sets, that does qualify the 1987 Hogan Topps card as a rookie card.

As for the card dealer who wanted a lot for the one card, next time you see him, maybe you should inform him of this: Earlier this year, I bought *ten* complete sets at a card show, and I paid \$10.00 per set. This was not a special price because I bought in quantity; I just bought all of what the dealer had because I thought they might be worth something someday.

•I. M.•
•NEW YORK CITY•

UNSCRUPULOUS PROMOTERS

I don't understand why inside fans and newsletter editors have to point out the behind the scenes things that goes on in wrestling promotions. The fan that wrote last issue about Joel Goodhart may be correct, but so what? If the man produces a quality wrestling product at a fair price, then why complain about how he does it? It isn't any of our business how he treats his wrestlers. If they don't want to work for him, that's their choice. If as a fan, the guy feels he's being ripped off by high ticket prices, then he doesn't have to go to the show. If he doesn't like the guy's radio show, then he doesn't have to listen.

Wrestling promoters are no more unscrupulous than your average businessman. It's just that we don't hear about how the guy at the local hardware store marks up his prices 200% or how the guy at the bar waters down the spirits.

•GARY FLYNN•
•BALTIMORE, MD•

World Championship Wrestling

The latest Clash of Champions took place on 6/12 in Knoxville, TN (the other Knoxville) and was dubbed Knocksville, USA. It was a decent show for the most part; let's take a look at the results:

FREEBIRDS & BAD STREET

VS

YOUNG PISTOLS & TOM ZENK

An okay match was ruined by a stupid ending that even the densest marks had to realize was choreographed. The babies won it with a triple sunset flip. That is, all three babies sunset flipped all three heels simultaneously. **GRADE: D-**

OZ VS JOHNNY RICH

I wonder if Ted Turner ever watches what his wrestling company is producing. If he does, then Oz would be history. Squash match. **GRADE: ZZ**

DAN SPIVEY VS BIG JOSH

Josh got hit with a crutch that mysteriously broke off cleanly. Spivey pinned him after that. Not real good. **GRADE: D**

DUSTIN RHODES VS TERRY TAYLOR

This match was not tightly worked. Keep that in mind when you see the low grade. It just looked too "fake." The whole precept behind this match (since we've already seen it on PPV) was to set up an angle. The end was a DQ of some sort (not clear because it was lost in the angle). Dustin had just hit the bulldog when Mr. Hughes jumped up on the ring apron. Ricky Morton ran in the ring and attacked Dustin and all three – Morton, Taylor and Hughes – beat on Dustin for a while. Not surprising that Ricky, er ah, Richard Morton is the newest member of the York Foundation. More later. **GRADE: C-**

NIKITA KOLOFF VS STING

I was impressed with both men's work. Nikita beat on Sting like he was a jobber for most of the match. The end came when Sting was able to reverse a tombstone piledriver and deliver it himself. He then tried a Stinger Splash, but Nikita got out of the way. Nikita then went for a clothesline in the corner, but Sting ducked and caught Koloff in a schoolboy roll up for the win. **GRADE: B-**

EL GIGANTE & BRIAN PILLMAN

VS

BARRY WINDHAM & ARN ANDERSON

The loser of the fall had to leave World Championship Wrestling. Bye Bye Brian. Gigante never even got in the ring. Some nice work by the three

who did. Giant was okay outside. **GRADE: B-**

HIROSHI HASE & MASA CHONO VS STEINERS

I wonder if the Steiners are capable of having a bad match. Not when they've got a pair like Hase and Chono in the ring with them. Another good match that looked as if they may have had a minor communication problem. Steiners did their hot moves and Hase was impressive with his kicks. Throughout the match the Steiners used heel moves, but the fans still cheered. That may have something to do with the match being shown back in Japan and trying to convince the Japanese that the Steiners are heels. The end came with Scott being double teamed. The Japanese duo went for a double clothesline and missed. As they came off the ropes, Rick grabbed Chono's ankle and Scott hit Hase with a Frankensteiner. After the match, Dick Murdoch and Dick Slater, newcomers known as the Hardliners, did a run in and "broke" Rick's arm. **GRADE: A-**

DIAMOND STUDD VS TOMMY RICH

Another squash. Studd won it with the Diamond Death Drop. **GRADE: F**

MUTA VS LEX LUGER

This one was short, but good. Muta, knowing he was doing the job, wasn't quite up to par, but still better than 85% of main eventers today. He went for his handspring elbow in the corner, but Luger moved and Muta, doing his impression of the Energizer Bunny, kept going and going...all the way over and to the floor. When he got back in, he had the mist loaded in his mouth. Luger managed to cover up his eyes, nullifying the effect and then hit Muta with a powerslam to win. **GRADE: B**

STEVE AUSTIN VS JOEY MAGS

Mags, an independent wrestler from Baltimore and who had worked Memphis for a while, must be the highest paid wrestler in WCW if you go by a per second average. This match lasted all of 24 seconds and only because Austin stalled around after hitting the Stun Gun (his version of the hot shot) at the 0:11 mark. Too short to grade.

RIC FLAIR VS BOBBY EATON

This was to be two of three falls. Given that, plus the fact that Dusty Rhodes is booker and he doesn't seem to like world champions who get clean pin falls, we pretty well guessed what was going to happen. Eaton took the first fall cleanly with an Alabama Jam from the top rope. The second fall went to Flair when Eaton tried the move again. Flair knocked Eaton off the top rope and Bobby hurt his knee. He was counted out. Playing on this angle, they did one of Dusty's favorite finishes where the babyface (usually Dusty) won't give up to Flair's figure four, but lays down with his shoulders on the mat because of the pain, and is "pinned." Not a very strong ending; it's too bad the champ can't get at least one clean pinfall on TV. **GRADE: B+.** The reason Flair was made to look like this is so that it will generate interest in the forthcoming PPV match with Luger. Since this is the umteenth time these two have met on PPV, they'd better forget that and put

in some kind of stipulation that will generate interest. An example: If Luger fails to win the title, he must retire; leave WCW; never challenge again; have steroids banned from him; anything that might look like a major sacrifice

NOTES AND OTHER STUFF...There was a lot of other stuff that happened as well that wasn't covered in the match report. We'll take a look at that right now.

First note of interest (an oxymoron) was the intro of P.U. News. He brought a couple of female rap group members to the ring as he did what ever you call what he tries to do. I think they want us to think he's black, but I believe he's Hawaiian. During his interview, Teddy Long and Johnny B Badd came to the ring to insist that Johnny was the real rap master. Johnny told P.U. that he was nothing but a big old ugly bear. I'm not sure which word it was that upset P.U., but one of them did. Looks like this will be one of the future feuds set up for Bash matches. I sort of like the idea. I can't stand P.U., and I hate the Badd character. The reason I like the idea is because by pairing them off like this, there's just one match I can absolutely hate rather than two. Thanks, Dusty. This gives me time for a refrigerator raid.

I also just figured out why no rapper ever uses his real name; he doesn't want relatives to know what he does for a living.

Paul E Dangerously did a Danger Zone earlier in the show with Jason Hervey as his guest. They argued for a while before Jason turned his back to leave the ring. That's when Paul took his hollow phone and nailed Jason in his hollow head. Missy ran to the ring to make the save.

Ricky Morton did an in ring interview after he had attacked Dustin. He was officially made a member of the York foundation. Surprise of the night was Robert Gibson (though it only made sense) who jumped in the ring to tell Ricky that he was well, and that he was ready to rock and roll. The other members of the Foundation started to advance towards Ricky, but he stopped them telling them that that wasn't in the contract he had signed. He then put his arm around Gibson and said, "Robert, I've been waiting ten years to do this," and then nailed him with a punch and a piledriver. That should help to make the turn effective.

Also on the show, Sting came to ringside to meet the winner of a Sting Look-a-like contest. The small boy seemed genuinely thrilled to meet Sting and Sting lifted him up in his arms. Nikita came in from behind and as soon as Sting set the kid down, Nikita hit him with a clothesline. After rubbing some of the paint off Sting's face, Nikita made a threatening move towards the boy. Jim Ross stood off to the side with wide eyes as the boy's mother jumped the guard rail to protect him. It was very effective, but after Nikita was ushered out, they let the little boy go over to the fallen Sting and cradle his head in his lap. I sure hope this kid was a plant. If he was, then he's one hell of a little actor. If he wasn't, then there is no excuse for scaring him as bad as he looked like he (and his mother) was.

Other news...

Bobby Eaton lost the TV title prior to the Clash to Steve Austin.

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They really didn't want anyone to know about it ahead of time but they managed to blow it themselves. They showed some clips of Steve in action with the advertisement "COMING TO AN ARENA NEAR YOU!" The problem was, Steve was wearing the TV-belt in the clips. Here's WCW logic for you: the newsletters expose the business. WCW didn't expose anything with that clip because no one would have noticed had we not pointed it out. Get me a shovel; it's gettin' deep again.

You won't be hearing Dusty Rhodes' golden voice anymore on WCW broadcasts. He's been taken off the air effective last week. Jim Herd and company have decided what we've known all along: that Dusty, during his broadcasts, is not interested in selling WCW wrestling, he's interested in selling Dusty! Tony Shivone replaced Rhodes on the latest Clash broadcast. Official word is that this will allow Dusty more time to devote to booking.

Jim Ross now has a weekly radio show on WSB-AM in Atlanta. It's on WSB is a clear channel station at 750 on the AM dial that reaches across most of the south and even this far north (before cable TV and WTBS, I would listen to Dodger Braves games from the west coast on this station). I listened in on parts of the first broadcast and Jim had Dusty Rhodes as his guest. Callers were invited to call in on the air and Dusty answered their questions. From what I heard, this was the biggest ego trip Dusty has ever taken. He was comparing himself to people like Babe Ruth and Reggie Jackson (Dusty could never have been a baseball player because no matter where he stood in the batter's box, his gut would have hung over the plate). and said that he could have played either football or baseball professionally. Folks, it was vintage BS.

Jeannie Clark, who managed Steve Austin in World Class has replaced Vivacious Vicki as his manager here as well. I'm told that Steve requested the change after Jeannie asked for the job. She should be a little more colorful than Vicki.

Cuts in the announcing department continue to be made. Gordon Solie has been taken off the syndicated show and speculation is that they will not be using him for anything. Paul E has been handling the update spots that Gordon had been doing. I've always liked Gordon, and I hate to say this, but maybe it's finally time for him to retire.

I've just been informed that I've been blacklisted from the WCW cruise that is coming up later in the year. My name appears on a list that was given to the people in charge of travel reservations. They were told that anyone on this list is not to be allowed to book passage. What a laugh! They think I can afford a cruise?!?! Get real!

Phantom of the Ring

by Ed Garea

THE EVOLUTION OF THE STEREOTYPE

Wrestling is, at its base, an exploitation game. It developed the ability during the Twenties and Thirties to ape whatever fad was in style, whether athletically, culturally or socially. To trace the roots of this, we must first look at how wrestling changed in the Twenties.

Prior to World War I, professional wrestling was governed by many of the same conventions that governed boxing. It was touted as a legitimate sport and was often treated as such by the legitimate press. To look at photos of such stars as Frank Gotch, Fred Beall, Stan and Wladek Zbyszko, and compare them with photos of the likes of John L. Sullivan and Jim Corbett is to notice no difference whatsoever. Gotch, Beall, etc. looked like professional athletes; they wore no make-up, no masks, no tassels.

Professional wrestling matches back then were divided into two kinds: the "Championship Match," often held at a major arena or field, and the "carny show," held in the carnival or fair. The difference between the two was in the way each was promoted. The former was promoted as a serious sporting event. The wrestlers were presented as world class athletes vying for whatever laurels were on the line. The latter was staged mainly for the betting enjoyment of the audience. Most aspiring professionals used the carnies to tune up for the big city circuit. Most of the shenanigans occurred at the carnies; some of them would haunt a wrestler for the rest of his career. Frank Gotch and Jim Londos couldn't defend their championships in several states because of outstanding indictments for fraud. There were two basic forms of the wrestling scam practiced at the carnies level.

The first involved the use of a "plant" in the audience. The plant would usually be dressed like a working man and would gravitate towards whatever ethnic group was most enthusiastic, passing himself off as a Greek, German, Pole, etc. While his two confederates grappled in the ring, the plant would make observations about how he was better than either man in the ring and could easily beat both if given a chance. The suckers, by now worked up, offered to back their man with money. The plant would then go into the ring and proceed to lose. The suckers would be fleeced and the wrestlers would be all the richer.

In the second, the wrestler barnstormed the countryside, taking on all "challengers" at fairs and carnivals. Unseen by the crowd were the usual "opponents." These opponents were usually the ones chosen to fight the champ, and, depending on the amount wagered, either beat the time limit or got pinned. Frank Gotch was a past master at this form of swindle, using it to great effect in the logger camps of Alaska under the name Frank Kennedy in 1903-04.

The "serious" form of professional wrestling was soon to take a tumble, the victim, as it were, of a double whammy. The first blow came when Gotch retired in 1913. Thanks to his tussles with George Hackenschmidt, Gotch was a big name and drawing card. Injuries and wild living caught up with him, however, and forced his retirement. A tourney was held to determine his successor, but until the advent of Joe Stetcher onto the scene in 1915, the sport of professional wrestling suffered its

first depression.

The second blow was the First World War, and it was to prove ultimately more damaging to wrestling than Gotch's retirement. At the time the war broke out, Earl Caddock was the world's champion. Caddock was an extremely popular champ, using a form of flying tackle to end his matches. He was drafted into the army, gassed on the battlefield and was never the same again. His absence from the game and reduced skill upon his return diminished his popularity.

Wrestling still had big stars in Joe Stecher, Strangler Lewis, the Zbyszkos, and upcoming stars such as Jim Londos and Ray Steele. But the pizzazz was gone; the fans were tired of two hour draws and instead spent their dollars on boxing, which boasted such leading lights as Jess Willard, Georges Carpentier and Jack Dempsey. The question now turned from where to stage the next match to if a next match was staged.

At this point a savior came into the game. His name was Joseph "Toots" Mondt. Mondt was a carny grappler who also had preliminary bouts at championship cards. His real contribution, however, came from his fertile mind.

Mondt had a relatively simple idea, but an idea whose time had truly come. Although wrestling historians generally credit Mondt with hatching the idea of "working" a match, technically, this was not true. Wrestling had always been worked in some form or another during its history. Mondt's idea was simply to standardize the matches; the same match worked in Kansas City could be worked a week later in Los Angeles. Who'd be the wiser?

Mondt's partner in the venture, one Strangler Lewis, not only saw the virtue in this scheme, but also knew the value of a good angle from his experience in a New York Tournament held in 1915. It was the first tournament in this country to use a masked man as one of its participants and Lewis remembered that most of the fanfare was devoted to this hooded wrestler, and the promoters made the most of the mystery man.

So, wrestling was two-thirds of the way top a total revamp. It remained for an immigrant ballet director to supply the final piece to the puzzle. He was Jack Pfeffer.

Pfeffer, being an immigrant ethnic Russian, noticed the potential to be had from ethnic crowds who just couldn't warm up to such sports as Boxing or baseball, but stuck mostly to soccer. Wrestling was much bigger in Europe than here and was much more attuned to the ethnic angles. Pfeffer adapted that here and sold his product to each ethnic group. There was a Russian champion, a Jewish champion, and Italian champion, and Irish champion, etc., etc., etc.

Thus wrestling was being splintered to fit each ethnic pocket in the locality. There still existed as "mainstream" audience, and that audience was exploited by Mondt and Lewis, among others, who, during the twenties, opted for All-American college football types over ethnics. It wasn't until the thirties, when the Depression hit and folks were tighter with their entertainment dollars, that wrestling would see an ethnic champion in a mainstream promotion.

Part II will cover the 30's and 40's.

Anderson as TV champ, the Hearbreakers as tag champs and Mondo Clean as IWA world champ. The show was taped before a sell out crowd of 600 people. This, along with Rob Russen's IWA and Boris Melenko's UWF make three groups based in Florida. I don't know where Abrams has his mobile office this week, but that could make four independents based from here.

Mario Savoldi's IWCCW has score a minor coup. They will be working with the WWF in an agreement that allows certain Titan wrestlers to work for them. The agreement was reached when Vince decided that he could send some of the wrestlers he doesn't use all the time or on house shows or who need to be phased out. This way, these wrestlers will stay under contract with Vince and he won't lose them to WCW. Vince apparently isn't worried about any threat from Savoldi's group. Savoldi, in the meantime, is claiming that his latest set of TV tapes, which included Tito Santana, was done for ESPN. I'm told that the tapes may be *sent* to ESPN for a possible slot, but ESPN is not interested at this time.

Chris Cruise, who developed a cult following after his work on the NWA syndicated show, did the play by play work for these latest set of tapes for Savoldi.

TRIAL SET FOR MAN ACCUSED OF SELLING ILLEGAL STEROIDS TO WRESTLERS

George Zaharias, a doctor from Harrisburg, PA will be on trial starting June 24 for allegedly selling illegal annabolic steroids to wrestlers. The charges date back to the seventies.

It is believed that a complaint signed by Wayne Coleman (Superstar Billy Graham) initiated the investigation which has led to the charges being filed against Dr. Zaharias. Several former Titan wrestlers have received subpoenas to testify at the trial which is scheduled to begin on June 24.

Among those being called are Graham, Rick Martel, and Roddy Piper. It is rumored that Hulk Hogan's name is on the list to be subpoenaed, but Vince McMahon will do everything in his power, including testifying himself, to keep Hogan out of the courtroom.

We have contacted authorities in Harrisburg and should be able to provide some actual trial transcripts in later issues.



MEMPHIS




with help from Bill Burnett

First off, we want to wish Bill Burnett, our super correspondent from Memphis a speedy recovery! Bill's been hospitalized for the past couple of weeks with pneumonia. Just to show you what kind of fan Bill is, he took his trusty notebook to the hospital with him so we wouldn't miss a report! Bill says there's nothing worse than "fever, hiccupping, vomiting, and having to watch a Bill Dundee interview without the luxury of a fast forward button." Thanks for your support, Bill! We really appreciate it!

Lots of new talent making their way to Memphis these days. That plus the return of Jerry Lawler has pumped some new interest into the promotion.

One newcomer is Carl Styles. Carl has been wrestling in the Pacific Northwest for the past couple years. He's most famous for an incident in Georgia during an independent TV taping about three years ago. Styles has a glass eye, and as part of the angle, they took it out and rolled it around the ring. Absolutely disgusting! The only reason I bring it up is because it looks like Jerry Lawler has returned to booking shows as well, and no doubt we'll be seeing a repeat of this angle in the weeks to come. If they do, I hope WMC-TV has extra operators standing by. Styles is working as a heel here.

Tagar, Lord of the Volcano, is another new guy, but we're not sure who he is. What he is, is weird. He wears a mask and carries a shield to the ring. The shield shoots out sparks and smoke, sort of like Van Vader. His finishing move is the claw, but this is really different. He wears a glove on his hand and right before he applies the claw, he points into the air and fire shoots out of his finger. Neat! Sounds like Louis Tannen's Magic Shop has been shipping orders to Memphis again. He also, is a heel.

Also in is Judge Dred and Samu as a tag team. Samu is not the Samoan Samu as you might suspect; he looks more like something that would come out of a genie bottle. He's not bad; he uses a lot of high flying moves while Dred, billed at 6-7, 300+ pounds, uses the power moves. They came in billed as the Western States Tag Team Champions. Why, since no one has ever heard of that title before? Because on the 6/17 card in Memphis, they are having a title vs title match with Jeff Jarrett and

Robert Fuller putting up the USWA version of the world tag belts.

Dong Cha Mang, billed as a world champion kick boxer from Viet Nam, is also working here. They aren't putting him in against any wrestlers yet, but he does have a match scheduled with Bob Zukowski on the 6/17 card.

Jerry Lawler returned to the promotion as an active wrestler and is determined to take care of Eric Embry. In his absence, Embry had been telling everyone that he was personally responsible for Lawler being out of action. Now that Lawler has returned, Embry wants no part of him. A match has been signed for 6/17 that pits Lawler against an Embry find, Leatherface, and if Lawler wins, then he gets three minutes in the ring with Embry.

To hype the match, Embry came out and started talking about the Texas Chainsaw Massacre. He told, complete with very gruesome details, that it was a true story and that they never caught the guy responsible. They then showed clips from the movie Texas Chainsaw Massacre. I guess they're trying to make us think Leatherface is the same guy. Finally, Lawler got fed up with this and ran in to the interview area and chased Embry away.

We all just keep waiting for Robert Fuller to turn on Jeff Jarrett. It may be coming soon. Either that, or Jeff may be turning, I'm not sure which. Over the past couple of weeks, they've been talking on TV about the unlikely team of Jarrett and Fuller and they've been saying that if they ever lose, they will probably break up. That makes us think that Fuller will eventually blame Jeff when they do lose and beat the snot out of him. The more I think about it, the more I think it'll be the other way around. Jeff's never been a heel, and being a heel is something that every wrestler (with the exception of Bob Backlund) always wants to do. Add that to the fact that last week, Jeff came out and asked for a title match with Dundee for the Southern Heavyweight championship, and you've got your subtle hints that Lawler likes to use in his booking. I look for things to happen soon here, maybe as soon as the 17th when they go against Dred and Samu.

Pistol Pez Whatley is also in as a babyface. He continues to shuck and jive in a role that has to be offensive to black people. He's never been the same since Junk Yard Dog slapped him in the face way back in the days of Georgia Championship Wrestling.

Dirty White Girl has also returned, much to the delight of audiences. Kim is feuding with Miss Texas, Tom Pritchard's valet/manager. A clip from the Pitkin building showed the girls brawling and rolling around in very short skirts. Gee, I wonder what they're really trying to sell here.

BIO

NIKITA KOLOFF
REAL NAME: SCOTT SIMPSON
DEBUTED: 1984
TRAINED BY: EDDIE SHARKEY

Upon entering the wrestling game, Nikita was given a huge push because of his size. Jim Crockett promotions needed a huge muscular type to fill the role of Ivan Koloff's nephew Nikita and they called Eddie Sharkey who had been turning out some fairly decent muscle men.

With his head shaved and a good "Russian" accent, Nikita made his debut, billed as a former Olympic class athlete that did not get to compete in the games due to the political situation. He was immediately dubbed "the Russian Nightmare" and teamed with "Uncle Ivan."

Before the end of his first year, he and Ivan had captured the NWA world tag titles. He also held the six man titles with Ivan and Don Kernodle and later with Krusher Kruschev (now Smash of Demolition).

During his first year and a half, many wrestlers were afraid to work with him due to his stiff work. In the tag matches, Ivan and Krusher had been able to hide him, but by mid 1985, he was being pushed into singles matches.

In tag team action, he and Ivan had a natural feud with the Road Warriors. As NWA champs, they once defended those titles against the AWA straps owned by the Warriors. It was a perfect feud with three of the four being Sharkey trainees.

In 1986 he began a feud with Magnum TA for the United States championship. They wrestled a best of seven series on the Great American Bash tour and Nikita ended up winning the title. His feud with Magnum continued until Allen's tragic car accident that ended his wrestling career.

Dusty Rhodes, NWA booker at the time, needed to pop something big to replace his number one babyface. He turned Nikita with no notice and the result was a tremendous success. Nikita became the first Russian babyface and was given an even bigger push.

Now it was time to feud with Uncle Ivan. Al Blake, yet another Sharkey trainee was brought in to play Vladimir Petrov, a childhood rival of Nikita's. This feud was short lived as Petrov was too green to make it in a major promotion. The fact that he

was convicted of drug charges and sentenced to prison didn't help matters either.

Nikita lost the US championship to Lex Luger in July 1987 after holding it eleven months. He regained a strap a month later by defeating Tully Blanchard for the TV title. This title was then unified with Bill Watts' UWF TV title at Starrcade 87 with Nikita squashing Terry Taylor for supremacy.

Koloff dropped the TV title to Mike Rotundo in January of 1988 and then took some time off from wrestling to be with his fiancée who had contacted leukemia.

He returned to the NWA a short time later to wrestle Ric Flair in the main event of the 1988 Crockett Cup. Disappearing again, he returned again, this time sporting a crew cut rather than the usual shaved head. He never really got the push to main events after that, dividing his time between wrestling and his new, terminally ill wife Mandy.

During the summer of 1988, he reformed the tag team with Ivan, feuding with Paul Jones and his masked Russian Assassins.

He left the promotion by November to be with his dying wife.

For the next two years, he ran his gym, trained wrestlers, and worked the independent circuit. He made a special appearance for the NWA as a special referee during that time, but never made the big time. An attempt to join the WWF fell through and by now it was too late to change his gimmick.

On the independent circuit, he was asking for upwards of \$700 a night. When contacted for the UAWF convention in Chicago, this is the figure he quoted for working one match. Autograph sessions or any other personal appearances would have been nearly double, he said. The reason for the high fee was due to the medical bills he incurred with his sick spouse.

He returned to World Championship Wrestling a few months ago. Although he is yet to work a full time schedule, he began this stint as a superheel, smashing a championship belt over the head of Lex Luger. Gone is the crew cut in favor of the shaved head.

His most recent feud will be with Sting while he waits for Luger to win the WCW World title. He will most likely feud with Luger for that title, providing Luger is successful in taking the strap from Flair.

World Wrestling Federation

Sid Vicious debuted at the latest set of TV tapings done in Phoenix, but it doesn't look like his debut will be shown on TV. They've changed his name to Sid Justice and he'll be a babyface, and heir apparent to Hulk Hogan. Here's what happened.

Sid did two run ins at the TV tapings. One was following a Jacques Rougeau match in which the Mountie was shocking his beaten opponent with his cattle prod. Sid did the run in and beat the snot out of Jacques which got him over huge. His second appearance was to make a save after Earthquake was repeatedly splashing an opponent. Sid, with the crowd chanting his name, did a number on EQ and cleared the ring.

The first week of those tapes aired this weekend on the Superstars shows, but after the Mountie match, the tapes were edited to stop just before Sid's run in. It's our guess that the same thing will happen after the Earthquake match.

In the meantime, his arrival is becoming the most hyped event since MacArthur promised to return to the Phillipines. Babyfaces and heels alike are doing interviews saying how excited they are to have him coming in. The heels are saying that they are sure that their manager will be just right for him. I don't know if they are going to play up the old "who gets to sign the wrestler" angle again or not, but right now, Titan is not really giving any clues as to which role he'll be playing. That's probably the reason they cut the tape before his run in.

Tugboat has officially turned. This has been coming since he arrived in the WWF, but the turn took place during the first hour of tapings. He was involved in a six man tag match with the Sheepwhackers as his partners as they took on Earthquake and the Nasty Boys. Tugboat attacked the Sheepwhackers at the end of the match and splashed one of them to give his new friends the win.

Word has it that he now be called Typhoon and will form a tag team with Earthquake. I swear I'm not making this up. They are to be collectively known as the "Natural Disasters" and will be feuding with Andre and Jake. This may be the first time in the history of wrestling that the name of a tag team accurately describes the action in the ring.

Bobby Heenan has been pulled from the road and will not be managing anymore. He will remain in his position of co host of Prime Time, and he'll continue to do periodic color duties, but he will not be representing any wrestlers. As usual, we have two stories explaining the reason for this change. The official Titan version has Heenan not wanting to spend time on the road as a manager anymore. This version has the decision being a mutual one. The story that's making the rounds with the boys is that Vince is finally getting around to punishing Heenan for being caught with drugs on the airplane down in Florida this past winter. At any rate, I'm told the boys are

very happy about Heenan's departure from the road. He was supposedly the biggest brown nose at Titan. I guess that distinction will have to go to Dave Hebner now.

The way it was announced to the public was on the Paul Bearer segment of the Superstars show. Curt Hennig was the guest and he started things off by paying tribute to his "former" manager, Heenan. It was said that he wanted to devote his time to broadcast journalism. Heenan came out to prove that he was still with the promotion, said a few words about his retirement and then introduced Hennig's new manager, Coach John Tolos. This was taped before the UWF Pay Per View last Sunday, so it's refreshing to see Tolos honor his commitment to Abrams after joining the WWF.

One thing I've learned from doing a bulletin for the past five years: if you say something long enough, it will eventually come true. For the longest time we've been predicting a "marriage" between Randy Savage and real life wife Liz. When Savage turned babyface at Wrestlemania, we started in again, but this time it looks like we'll be right. This past weekend on the Superstars show, Vince kept bugging Randy about his relationship with Liz. Savage kept dodging the issue. Vince even went as far as to ask if marriage was in the future of the two and Savage again tap danced around an answer. I would almost bet that one of the upcoming pay per views will feature a wedding (that will no doubt be broken up by a heel and get Randy back into active competition).

Titan returns to Peoria this coming Friday night, the 21st, and we'll try to have a live report for you. Let me check my schedule: No magic shows to do; no games that night to umpire; no basketball games to cover for radio or newspaper; toenails are already clipped; yep. Looks like we'll be there. I have no idea who'll be there and I'm afraid if I find out I may not want to go.

If you attend a live show, there are some new rules you must go by: 1) You can't wear WCW tee shirts. 2) You can't jeer the heels or the babyfaces. 3) You can't take notes. 4) You can't talk back to Dave Hebner because you might have a comeback that leaves him dumbfounded (usually two words or less will accomplish this). We assume these are the new rules because these are the reasons super correspondent Bruce Grummert and friends were kicked out of a house show for.

Bruce is one of the biggest wrestling fans in the nation. He travels the US to see major pay per views plus drives to just about any match within a 100 radius of his home in Lincoln, NE. Bruce is a super fan, giving the heels hell to the point of often being talked back to. Bulldog Bob Brown was always a nemesis of Bruce's. This past week, Bruce and a group of his friends were perched in the front row of a Titan house show in Lincoln Nebraska. They had been verbally bashing the heels when Dave Hebner got security to eject them from the arena. Hebner, who takes pride in his ability to dish out verbal abuse but can't seem to take it when tossed back at him, was supposedly upset by the fans' wearing of WCW apparel. He did refund their money, but allegedly told them that if they ever tried to get into a WWF

show again, they would be ejected. Bruce will be talking with some lawyers this next week about possible litigation. Titan would be smart to offer a whole bunch of free tickets to Bruce and friends and tell Hebner to leave his personal vendettas at home.

Ted DiBiase is back to doing some of his skits involving handing out money to kids who can perform certain demands. On a recent installment of Prime Time, he offered a kid money if he could hold a raw egg under his chin for ten seconds. Three guesses – and the first two don't count – as to what happened. At the count of nine, he reached up and smashed the egg on the kid. The boy was a plant, naturally.

One insider at Titan is confiding that the World Bodybuilding Federation is a bigger bust than anyone could possibly have anticipated. There's a big show coming up soon at the Trump Plaza and Vince is sending in wrestlers by the score to try and boost attendance. Ultimate Warrior and Randy Savage are scheduled to appear at something called a fitness fair and talk about conditioning. Warrior talk about conditioning? I'd be better qualified to discuss nuclear science with NASA engineers! Maybe he'll speak on how steroids can take away all your wind after running, say, fifty feet to, say, a wrestling ring.

There's an article in the June edition of *Spy* magazine that gives a good insight into the war between McMahon's WBF and the Weiders' International Federation of Body Building. Highly recommended reading, though written with an obvious bias against McMahon.

Prime Time Wrestling has become nothing more than a giant commercial for Hogan's hotline (\$1.49 first minute, 99¢ additional minutes). The running gag is that Bobby Heenan can't seem to win, but some nerdy character (Jamison Somethingorother) always wins. One Titan source tells me that the night that Prime Time is on is the biggest night for the hotline.

Road Warrior Hawk is out of action with a bad back. He'll be out of action for about a month and a half. Where the Roadies are scheduled against the Nasty Boys, they are announcing on TV that Hawk won't be there and that Animal will take on one or the other. I guess there's a first time for everything!

Chuck Austin, a jobber who was working one of his first few professional matches (and had no business in the ring) against the Rockers last year in Florida, has filed suit against TitanSports and the Rockers for injuries received in the match. During the match, which never made the airwaves, it appeared that Marty Janetty intentionally tried to injure Austin after he forgot to sell moves. It was feared after the match that Austin would be paralyzed, but after several days in the hospital, he recovered enough to at least walk. That was the last we had heard on his condition. Austin is asking for more than \$15,000 in compensation.

RESULTS FROM ALL OVER

5/24 OMAHA (WCW) – courtesy of **BRUCE GRUMMERT**... Black Blood beat Sam Houston...Dustin Rhodes pinned Black Bart...Freebirds & Bad Street over Pistols & Tommy Rich...Josh beat Hansen by DQ...Ron Simmons beat One Man Gang by DQ...El Grande over Ric Flair by DQ...Lex Luger pinned Nikita Koloff...**NOTES:** Att: 480 lots of DQ: Hansen for using bullrope, Gang and Flair from run ins.

5/25 KANSAS CITY (WCW) – courtesy of **BRUCE GRUMMERT** ...TC Carter beat local...Ric McCord pinned Mike George...Steve Ray & Ranger Ross over New Zealand Militia...Eaton pinned Taylor...Scott Steiner & Eaton defeated Arn Anderson & Angel of Death...Sting pinned Barry Windham...**NOTES:** Att: 828...No shows included Rick Steiner and Dan Spivey...Eaton Taylor best match on card...

5/31 CHICAGO (WWF) – courtesy of **STEVE SIMS**...Colonel Mustafa beat Koko B Ware...Greg Valentine over Demolition Smash...Bossman pinned the Mountie...British Bulldog pinned Bezerker...Earthquake over Jake by DQ...Marty Janetty defeated Kato...Kerry Von Erich and Warlord went to a double count out...Warrior beat Undertaker by DQ...**NOTES:** Att: 13,000+...three matches, 1st, 2nd and 4th all had same ending: missed move into the corner followed by a schoolboy...Lots of no shows including Curt Hennig (scheduled against Bulldog), Sean Michaels, and Pat Tanaka.

6/5 HAMMOND, IN (WCW) – courtesy of **STEVE SIMS**...Black Bart over Tommy Angel...Steve Austin pinned Tommy Rich...Junk Yard Dog over Psycho Sam...Oz beat Tom Zenk...Young Pistols beat Freebirds...Lex Luger pinned Barry Windham...**NOTES:** Att: 850...Oz came out with no music, manager or clue, says Steve and the fans were laughing at him...Freebirds tonight consisted of Hayes and Bad Street (Brad Armstrong) as Jimmy Garvin got the the building late.

6/15 SEMINOLE, FL (UWF) - courtesy of **SHANNON ROSE** ...Rock & Roll Warrior drew Brian Jurnagan...Spartan beat Cody Wade...Big V & Trooper over Jim Cooper & Paul Sampson...Chris Proctor defeated Barry Horowitz...Dean Malenko pinned Jumbo Baretta... **NOTES:** ATT: 900...Show was promoted by Boris Malenko, not Herb Abrams.

MISCELLANEOUS STUFF

A couple three issues ago, Ed Garea wrote an obituary for Mike Mazurki, wrestler turned actor. Here's a bit of trivial info for you trivia buffs: On the TV series Perry Mason, Perry lost just one case in the entire run of the show. Mike Mazurki had a bit part in that show as one of the heavies. His most memorable part of the role had him getting hit in the chest by a medicine ball thrown by Mason (Raymond Burr).

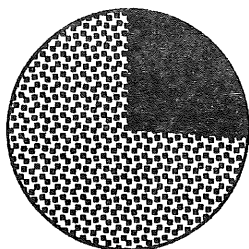
You may have heard about the boxing debut of former professional football player Mark Gastineau. He won his match in just a few seconds over Derrick Dukes, the same Derrick Dukes who was involved in the paint matches with Colonel DeBeers two years ago. Gastineau hit him with a punch in the elbow and Dukes sold it like a pro. Dukes admitted that he took a dive but later retracted the statement. The promoter was quoted as saying that if he needed someone to take a dive, he'd be sure to get a professional wrestler. Dukes' manager was IWA promoter Rob Russen.

I made sure they were in my grubby little hands before I said anything this issue: **THE YEARBOOKS ARE HERE!** If you ordered one, it came with this bulletin. If you ordered one and didn't get one, then call me and I'll straighten it out. It's smaller than usual, but that's mainly because we were able to reduce the type with the computer. Sorry for the delay, but we thought the printer was going to do all the work in house. He didn't and the yearbook ended up going around the country three times before I got it. Sorry again.

Tabloid troubles again for the WWF. This week, the *Examiner* has a story and pictures of Hulk Hogan that appeared in *Oui* in 1982. It shows Hogan posing with nude and semi nude models. That issue of *Oui* also contains an interview with Hogan's mother Ruth.

In our subscription drive (which is turning out to be more of a crawl), things stayed the same for the second issue in a row. At least it wasn't a loss. Thanks for your support. See you in two weeks.

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